

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

DEA HQTRS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7893

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR CO

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS REPORT-COLOMBIA; APRIL-JULY 1975

RESYC BOGOTA 4065 AND 7394 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DRUG TRAFFICKERS FACE COURT MARTIAL UNDER EMERGENCY DECREE PROMULGATED IN JUNE. NEW INTERNAL MISSION NARCOTICS OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES INSTITUTED IN MAY CALL FOR COORDINATION OF DEA OPERATIONS WITH THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL (PROCURADOR DELEGADO) FOR JUDICIAL POLICE. JUDICIAL POLICE NARCOTICS UNITS UNDER CONTROL OF THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL EXPAND COVERAGE TO INCLUDE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS AT BARRANQUILLA AND MEDELLIN. GOC CUSTOMS PLANS MAJOR EXPANSION OF ITS SPECIALIZED NARCOTICS UNITS. MINISTRY OF HEALTH PUBLISHES PRELIMINARY STATISTICS ON SERIOUS DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM IN COLOMBIA.

2. ABUSE--PRELIMINARY STATISTICS PUBLISHED IN JULY BY THE GOC MINISTRY OF HEALTH CONFIRM SUSPICIONS THAT DRUG ABUSE IS BECOMING A MAJOR SOCIAL PROBLEM IN COLOMBIA.

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ACCORDING TO THE MINISTRY STUDY--BEGUN IN LATE 1974 AND

COVERING FOUR MAJOR COLOMBIAN CITIES--433 OUT OF EVERY 1000 SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS INTERVIEWED IN COLOMBIA'S SECOND LARGEST CITY, MEDELLIN, HAVE EXPERIMENTED AT LEAST ONCE WITH DRUGS. OF THESE 433 STUDENTS, 117 ARE FREQUENT USERS OF DRUGS AND ARE DEPENDENT UPON THEM. PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS ARE MOST ABUSED, BUT MARIJUANA RUNS A CLOSE SECOND. RESULTS OF THE MINHEALTH STUDY--WHICH IS BEING EXTENDED TO INCLUDE A TOTAL OF EIGHT CITIES--RECEIVED GOOD PRESS AND TV COVERAGE THROUGHOUT COLOMBIA. IN AN EFFORT TO COUNTERACT THE WIDELY HELD COLOMBIAN BELIEF THAT DRUG ABUSE

IS STRICTLY A NORTH AMERICAN PROBLEM, USIS BOGOTA FEATURED A REPORT OF THE STUDY ON ITS WEEKLY HALF-HOUR NATIONAL TV PROGRAM.

3. PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING--THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY (DAS) AND ARMY TROOPS ARE COOPERATING IN THE DESTRUCTION OF SOME 80 HECTARES OF MARIJUANA FIELDS IN THE CAUCA VALLEY. MISSION OFFICERS OBSERVED PART OF THE OPERATION, WHICH BEGAN IN JUNE AND IS STILL GOING ON. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES, THE MARIJUANA WAS NOT BEING GROWN ON ONE SINGLE PLANTATION. RATHER, PRODUCTION WAS BEING CARRIED OUT ON SMALL, TWO-TO THREE-HECTARE PLOTS CULTIVATED BY A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CAMPESINOS AND SCATTERED OVER A TWENTY-MILE SQUARE AREA.

4. TRAFFICKING TRENDS: THE ARREST OF THREE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS IN ECUADOR CONFIRMED SUSPICIONS THAT COLOMBIA MILITARY AIRCRAFT ARE BEING USED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. THE THREE OFFICERS--WHOSE FLOAT PLANE MADE AN EMERGENCY LANDING IN ECUADOR--WERE ARRESTED IN JULY FOR POSSESSION OF SOME 250 POUNDS OF COCAINE PASTE DESTINED FOR CLANDESTINE LABS IN COLOMBIA. THE OFFICERS WERE CASHIERED FROM THE AIR FORCE AND NOW FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES IN ECUADOR.

5. ENFORCEMENT--THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL (PROCURADOR DELEGADO) FOR JUDICIAL POLICE HAS ESTABLISHED NEW COMBINED (CUSTOMS, DAS, F-2) NARCOTICS UNITS AT BARRANQUILLA AND MEDELLIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS. THE NEW 30-MAN UNITS ARE IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY OPERATING AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS OF BOGOTA AND CALI. GOC CUSTOMS HAS FORMED A CENTRAL NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIONS UNIT BASED IN BOGOTA. SPECIALIZED CUSTOMS DRUG INTERDICTION UNITS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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BEING ESTABLISHED AT KEY SEA PORTS INCLUDING CARTAGENA, BUENAVENTURA, AND SANTA MARTA. DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW, GOC NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AGENTS SEIZED OVER 46 KILOS OF COCAINE, NEARLY 1,000 KILOS OF COCA LEAVES AND PASTE AND 15,000 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA. FIFTY SIX TRAFFICKERS AND DRUG PROCESSORS WERE ARRESTED IN THE FOUR-MONTH PERIOD UNDER REVIEW. GOC ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ALSO DESTROYED ONE COCAINE PROCESSING LAB AND ONE AND ONE-HALF

HECTARES OF COCA PLANTS. EIGHTY AMERICAN CITIZENS ARE PRESENTLY IN JAIL IN COLOMBIA WAITING TRIAL ON DRUG TRAFFICKING CHARGES. TWELVE OTHER AMERICANS HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO VARYING PRISON TERMS FOR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. TRAFFICKERS ARRESTED SINCE JUNE 26-INCLUDING SEVERAL AMERICANS--WILL FACE MILITARY COURT MARTIAL UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY DECREE PROMULGATED BY THE GOC IN AN EFFORT TO ROLL-BACK RISING CRIME RATES AND SPEED THE JUDICIAL PROCESS. APPEAL FROM MILITARY COURTS MARTIAL IS THROUGH THE MILITARY APPEALS SYSTEM ONLY. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL IF THIS STATE OF EMERGENCY PROVISIONS WILL RESULT IN MARKEDLY SPEEDIER TRIALS AND HIGHER CONVICTION RATES FOR DRUG TRAFFICKERS.

6. TREATMENT/REHABILITATION/EDUCATION; IN JUNE, USIS BEGAN PRODUCTION ON A 30-MINUTE COLOR MOTION PICTURE FOCUSING UPON THE PROBLEMS OF DRUG ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING IN COLOMBIA. THE FILM, INTENDED FOR WORLD-WIDE DISTRIBUTION, WILL SHOW HOW THE GOC FIRST RECOGNIZED THAT IT FACED A NARCOTICS PROBLEM AND MOVED TO COMBAT IT. FILMING IS BEING DONE ENTIRELY IN COLOMBIA WITH THE ACTIVE ASSISTANCE OF GOC NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND VARIOUS GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES.

7. TRAINING; SIX NARCOTICS AGENTS FROM VARIOUS GOC ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ATTENDED SIX-WEEK DEA ADVANCED NARCOTICS COURSES IN WASHINGTON. A US CUSTOMS MOBILE TRAINING TEAM PRESENTED A TWO-WEEK NARCOTICS INTERDICTION COURSE IN BOGOTA FOR 47 AGENTS OF GOC CUSTOMS. FIFTEEN OF THESE AGENTS RECEIVED A FURTHER ONE-WEEK US CUSTOMS COURSE TO QUALIFY THEM AS NARCOTICS INSTRUCTORS. THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DANGEROUS DRUGS AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION OF THE GOC HEALTH MINISTRY ATTENDED A DRUG PREVENTION SEMINAR IN NEW MEXICO AND LATER VISITED WASHINGTON FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSULTATIONS WITH US DRUG PROGRAM OFFICIALS. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF COLOMBIAN CUSTOMS VISITED THE UNITED STATES FOR TWO WEEKS NARCOTICS INTERDICTION ORIENTATION AS THE GUEST OF THE DIRECTOR OF US CUSTOMS. DEA HAS SCHEDULED A TWO WEEK IN-COUNTRY NARCOTICS TRAINING COURSE FOR 50 AGENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY (DAS). THE COURSE BEGINS AUGUST 11.

8. REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION; THE DIRECTOR OF THE PANAMAIAN DENI DARIO AROSEMENA VISITED BOGOTA IN JUNE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOC ON DRUG ENFORCEMENT. THE AROSEMENA VISIT WAS ARRANGED BY DEA AND FINANCED FROM CCINC FUNDS.

9. MISSION AND HOST GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES; IN MAY, THE MISSION INSTITUTED NEW INTERNAL GUIDELINES FOR DEA OPERATIONS IN COLOMBIA (BOGOTA 4843). THESE GUIDELINES ARE INTENDED TO GIVE

DEA BOGOTA THE WIDEST POSSIBLE LATITUDE FOR JOINT OPERATIONS IN COOPERATION WITH THE GOC WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENCOURAGING CLOSER COORDINATION AMONG THE THREE COLOMBIAN DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. THE OPERATIVE PORTION OF THE NEW GUIDELINES STATE THAT ALL DEA OPERATIONS IN COLOMBIA WILL BE COORDINATED WITH THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR JUDICIAL POLICE (AAGJP), WHICH BY COLOMBIAN LAW IS CHARGED WITH DIRECTING AND COORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES OF ALL GOC NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. TO DATE, DEA BOGOTA HAS RECEIVED EXCELLENT COOPERATION FROM THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL WHO IS NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME BEGINNING TO ASSUME HIS LAWFUL ROLE AS COORDINATOR FOR GOC DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORTS.

10. A RECENT DECREE GIVES THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DANGEROUS DRUGS THE AUTHORITY TO SELL AT AUCTION OR OTHERWISE DISPOSE OF VEHICLES, AIRCRAFT OR OTHER MOVEABLE OR REAL PROPERTY SEIZED FROM DRUG TRAFFICKERS. PROPERTY FALLING UNDER THE TERMS OF THE DECREE INCLUDES ONE US-OWNED PRIVATE PLANE SEIZED BY COLOMBIAN POLICE EARLIER THIS YEAR. THE DECREE ALSO STATES THAT 30 PERCENT OF THE FUNDS GENERATED FROM THE SALE OF SEIZED PROPERTY MUST BE USED FOR DRUG EDUCATION, PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS. THE REMAINING PROCEEDS OR GOODS THEMSELVES MAY BE USED FOR ENFORCEMENT.

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